

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supporting Educators. Empowering Kids.
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North Carolina's Newly Selected Early Reading Assessment Company Issues Statement in Response to Previous Vendor's Letter of Protest

Istation will continue to work with North Carolina's School Districts to launch its product that is already successfully used by more than four million students nationwide ahead of the school year

DALLAS, TX – Istation, a national leader in education technology that was recently awarded a contract through a competitive proposal process by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as the K-3 reading diagnostic assessment vendor for the 2019-20 school year, is responding to the recent Letter of Protest filed by the predecessor vendor, Amplify, after the state declined to renew their contract.

Istation president Ossa Fisher issued the following statement after Amplify's protest letter was leaked to media outlets, directly violating the selection process and distributing misinformation about the process and Istation's product:

"Istation believes Amplify has violated the contract selection process by filing a frivolous protest without any substantial basis or merit - self-admittedly not grounded in facts. Their purpose is solely to cause unnecessary delay in the contract awarded to Istation. The false and misleading statements that Amplify is publicly distributing are intended to harass and cause harm to our company after we were awarded the contract - fair and square - based on our product offerings and proven track record working with millions of students across the country.

But they cannot fight the numbers - after six years in North Carolina under Amplify, the data shows that North Carolina students are no better off than they were before Amplify. We urge state leaders to continue to move in the positive direction for students and deny Amplify's frivolous and harmful request to suspend the contract and to deny them a protest hearing that has no merit and is not based on substantiating facts.

When state leaders asked for a different direction, we answered the call because we believed then - and now - that we are the best solution for North Carolina's early readers. Like we have in other states, we are eager to roll up our sleeves and work with teachers and parents to deliver results for North Carolina's students."

-- Ossa Fisher, President, Istation

Background on the Istation NC issue

- Read to Achieve legislation passed in 2012 to ensure that students were reading at grade level by 3rd grade, an important marker to reach high school graduation.
- Since 2012, the early rollout needed adjusting and the initial program selected, mClass, was criticized by teachers because of the time it took from the classroom. In the fall of 2018, research experts from NC State University's Friday Institute [found no gains under Read To Achieve](#).
- Following reports that reading scores statewide had not improved in the six years Amplify's product was used, state leaders called [for a revamp](#) of the program.
- The Department of Instruction cited the state law requiring their department to evaluate the best K-3 diagnostic tool to implement, announcing Istation's selection on June 13. The Istation selection process was thorough and followed state law. Though social media posts have claimed a DPI committee recommended continued contracting with Amplify - ***that committee did not reach consensus on a single vendor recommendation***. Subsequent reporting on this is false, and spreading erroneously through social media and traditional news outlets.
- Although Amplify did file a timely Protest Letter within the required 15 days from the contract award, their request fails to contain any documentation or factual information to support their concerns with the award to Istation as required pursuant to Section 09 NCAC 06B.1102. Instead, Amplify clearly admits in its letter (page 2, paragraph one): *"This protest letter is based on Information currently made available to Amplify,"* and (page 8, Section F, paragraph 3,) from *"the additional information Amplify has gleaned from the evaluation process"* - meaning they based it on hearsay and not on facts.
- Istation's products meet all the requirements set by Read to Achieve and [have proven results](#) working with millions of students across the country. Instead of stopping at the assessment, Istation's program includes a customizable learning plan for each student based on assessment findings. The full package of assessments and tools are included as opposed to other programs that charge districts extra for the reading tools.

[Two studies from 2018](#) report that Istation's assessments accurately predict student performance on end-of-grade tests.

- Istation's systems also take less time to administer - as little as 30 minutes to screen an entire class of students - freeing up important classroom time - a common complaint among educators about the current product.
- It's true that Istation is designed to engage young readers in the classroom, but all screens are not the same and educators have long used tools like Ipads and computers. Istation is proven to help achieve learning gains by administering assessments according to industry best practices - including that universal screening must be brief. Educators are involved in the assessment process every step of the way, providing hands-on supervision and support.
- Istation has a proven track record of supporting, and identifying students who have learning disabilities. In fact, Istation's ISIP Early Reading assessment is already being used in some states as a screener of risk for dyslexia.

About Istation

Founded in 1998 and based in Dallas, Texas, Istation (Imagination Station) has become one of the nation's leading providers of richly animated, game-like educational technology. Winner of several national educational technology awards, the Istation program puts more instructional time in the classroom through small-group and collaborative instruction. Istation's innovative reading, math and Spanish programs immerse students in an engaging and interactive environment and inspire them to learn. Additionally, administrators and educators can use Istation to easily track the progress of their students, schools and classrooms. Istation now serves over 4 million students throughout the United States and in several other countries.

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